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The purpose of this research project was to develop, administer, evaluate, and revise a set of tests which would effectively measure the academic and professional knowledge about English and the teaching of English possessed by prospective secondary school English teachers. The battery of tests was to consist of four parts covering knowledge of language, knowledge and attitude in written composition, knowledge and skill in literature, and knowledge and skill in the teaching of English. The researchers determined content and developed a pool of items for each test. With the help of experts in English, English education, and testing, preliminary drafts of the tests were written, revised, edited, and supplemented with a test administrator's manual. The tests and manual were field-tested at four ISCPET institutions. Field test results and the suggestions of 50 national experts in English and in teaching high school English were used to revise the tests again. The resulting instrument was the "Illinois Tests in the Teaching of High School English." The researchers concluded that the tests and manual, after further national testing and standardization, would be effective in measuring the degree of preparation of prospective high school English teachers. (No test is included.) (LH)

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ILLINOIS STATE-WIDE CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER
IN THE PREPARATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
ENGLISH TEACHERS (ISCPET)

Illinois Tests in the Teaching of High School English

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June 1969

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I. SUMMARY

A careful review of related research revealed that no examination exists today which effectively measures the knowledge about English and the teaching of English possessed by undergraduate English majors who are preparing to teach English in the secondary schools of the United States.

In this research study, conducted first at the University of Illinois and later as a cooperative project between the University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University, the researchers, with the help of selected item writers and national experts on English and the teaching of English, developed and field-tested the ILLINOIS TESTS IN THE TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH as follows: KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE, TEST A; KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION, TEST B; KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN LITERATURE, TEST C; and KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, TEST D. This study was initiated in January 1965, and it was completed in June 1969.

Following the field-testing, all tests were carefully revised in view of thorough critiques from fifty national experts in English and the teaching of English and in view of data from a computerized item-analysis program. Options for all test items received careful scrutiny. Most items were revised and retained; some items which were extremely easy, extremely difficult, or repeatedly criticized in a negative way by the national experts were omitted. In some cases where experts had recommended testing additional matters of knowledge and skill, the researchers wrote new test items. Two of the experts volunteered new items of the kinds which they believed should be included in the tests, and some of these were revised and added.

Together with the revised TEST ADMINISTRATOR'S MANUAL, the ILLINOIS TESTS IN THE TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH have been copyrighted. Thus, the researchers will be able to personally supervise further development and possible national standardization in an effort to produce tests that will ultimately be of the greatest possible value to the profession in the training of high school English teachers in the United States.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Problem, Background, and Review of Related Research

There exists today no examination which effectively measures the knowledge about English and the teaching of English possessed by undergraduate English majors who are preparing to teach English in the secondary schools of the United States. Some of the examinations which come closest to doing this test certain distinct aspects of subject matter; others, mainly teaching "area" examinations or graduate-level competency examinations, only skim the surface of the content of English or the teaching of English. In view of present and anticipated research in the preparation of English teachers, there is great danger that a critical lag will soon exist between efforts to improve preparation on one hand and evaluation on the other. The great diversity characteristic of college and university programs which prepare English teachers also makes evident the need for an examination which has considerable scope and depth, as well as general acceptance by leaders in English education.

The researchers carefully examined the professional literature, listings of published tests, descriptions of tests developed by local school systems, and replies to inquiries from all known publishers of professional tests for teachers in an effort to determine the extent to which tests now in existence are designed to test prospective or experienced secondary school English teachers. With the exception of the "English Language and Literature Test" of the National Teacher Examinations, published by the Educational Testing Service, there exists today no examination for English teachers which is administered throughout a state or throughout the nation. Admittedly an "area" examination, the Language and Literature Test is very limited in scope and depth. As such, it seems to have limited value as an instrument to measure the knowledge and skills which prospective teachers of secondary school English should possess.

In addition to examining existing tests for secondary school English teachers, the researchers investigated tests for persons trained in other professions. Professor Thomas Hastings of the University of Illinois, a frequent consultant on test development to various professional organizations, assisted in this effort. Dr. Christine McGuire of the Medical College of the University of Illinois conferred on two occasions with the researchers about her development of tests for prospective medical doctors. The researchers examined the designs and formats of these tests, as well as those used by other professions.

B. Objectives

The immediate and main objective: This research study would develop, administer, evaluate and revise examinations which would effectively measure the knowledge and skills needed by prospective secondary school English teachers in the following areas: English language, written composition, literature, and methods of teaching English.

The long-range objective: This study would contribute significantly to the evaluation of English teacher preparatory programs in the cooperating institutions of the Illinois State-Wide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers (ISCPET), in other institutions in Illinois, and ultimately in institutions throughout the nation.

III. METHODS

A first step in the study was the determination of content for the tests in the four areas of English language, written composition, literature, and methods of teaching English. Recommendations for English teacher preparation were examined in published proceedings of the Conference on English Education, and in various other professional books and articles relating to teacher preparation in English.

The most significant source for determining content for the tests was "Qualifications of Secondary School Teachers of English: A Preliminary Statement," a set of guidelines developed prior to this study in working conferences by forty representatives from the twenty cooperating institutions in ISCPET. From this statement and those found elsewhere, the researchers developed a set of content objectives for each of the four tests, as follows:

ILLINOIS TESTS IN THE TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH:
KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE, TEST A

The English teacher understands how language functions.

The English teacher understands the principles of semantics.

The English teacher knows in detail at least two systems of English grammar.

The English teacher has developed sound concepts about levels of usage and dialectology, including a realization of the cultural implications of both.

The English teacher knows the history of the English language, and is aware of its phonological, morphological, and syntactic changes.

ILLINOIS TESTS IN THE TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH: KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION, TEST B

The English teacher demonstrates a well-developed ability to recognize such characteristics of good writing as substantial and relevant content; organization; clarity; appropriateness of tone; point of view; and accuracy in mechanics and usage.

The English teacher perceives the complexities in the process of composing.

The English teacher is able to analyze in detail the strengths and weaknesses in the writing of students and to communicate the analysis effectively.

The English teacher reveals an attitude or philosophy about written composition which shows considerable promise of helping high school students to become as proficient in writing as their capacities will allow.

ILLINOIS TESTS IN THE TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN LITERATURE, TEST C

The English teacher demonstrates his familiarity with the important works of major English and American authors, and his knowledge of the characteristics of various genres and of major works in English and American literature in the genres.

The English teacher is aware of patterns of development of English and American literature from their beginnings to the present, and he is aware of such backgrounds as history, the Bible, mythology, and folklore.

The English teacher demonstrates his familiarity with one or more major authors, and with at least one genre and one period.

The English teacher demonstrates some familiarity with literature which concerns minority groups, including some works by and about the American Negro.

The English teacher demonstrates his familiarity with major works of selected foreign writers, both ancient and modern, and with comparative literature.

The English teacher demonstrates his familiarity with major critical theories and schools of criticism.

The English teacher demonstrates his familiarity with a considerable body of literature suitable for adolescents.

The English teacher is able to read closely an unfamiliar literary text of above-average difficulty with good comprehension of its content and literary characteristics.

The English teacher is familiar with learning processes and with adolescent psychology.

The English teacher knows the content, instructional materials, and organization of secondary English programs, has developed sound concepts about the role of English in the total school program, and has arrived at sound principles of curriculum development in English.

The English teacher knows the most effective ways to teach English, and is able to select and adapt methods and materials for the varying interests and maturity levels of students, and to develop sequential assignments that guide, stimulate, and challenge students in their study of language, written and oral communication, and literature.

The English teacher is able to employ corrective and developmental reading techniques effectively and appropriately in the teaching of English.

The English teacher has developed sound principles of evaluation and test construction.

The English teacher is able to ask effective questions in teaching and in developing tests.

After experimenting with various test formats and item formats, including programed "process" tests with removable tabs and plasticized answer sheets, the researchers decided to develop test booklets containing modified multiple-choice items which could produce responses more easily scored and analyzed by existing test scoring equipment and computers. After developing, with the assistance of selected item writers in English and English education, a pool of items for each test, the researchers called together selected high school English teachers, specialists in English, specialists in English education, and a specialist in testing for three conferences in Chicago. Working in small groups, participants developed a preliminary draft of each of the four proposed tests. These conferences were scheduled several months apart.

During the times between conferences, the researchers refined existing test items, wrote new ones as needed, and sent drafts of the tests to all persons who had participated in developing the preliminary working drafts. In this manner, the researchers developed an experimental edition of each test.

In preparation for field testing, the researchers set up a pilot testing program with twelve ISCPET institutions and with East Tennessee State University. They also developed an experimental edition of the TEST ADMINISTRATOR'S MANUAL and arranged for statistical analyses of all tests by the Office of Instructional Resources (Measurement and Research Division) of the University of Illinois.

In order to establish further content validity for the tests, the researchers sent the experimental editions to fifty-eight recognized national experts in English and the teaching of secondary school English. The researchers asked each expert to study one or more tests carefully, to comment on the extent to which the items tested the matters of knowledge and skill listed in the objectives, and to make suggestions and changes which would improve the tests.

Fifty of the experts returned the experimental editions with very extensive written suggestions. Taking critiques on each test in turn, the researchers incorporated all suggestions that they considered appropriate and worthwhile in preparing the next-to-last draft of each test and the test manual.

A computerized item-analysis program was applied to the responses from prospective high school English teachers in the last half of their senior year at thirteen institutions. Although for various reasons eight of the ISCPET institutions did not participate, the population of test takers was sufficiently large and was representative of prospective high school English teachers prepared in Illinois. This computerized program scored the tests and produced item information and test-score statistics for each test. Included in the item analysis were statistics on the number of students attempting each item, the proportion passing each item, the biserial correlation of the total test score with the item score, and the point-biserial correlation of the total test score with the item score. The test statistics also included means and standard deviations of the raw scores and indices of skewness and kurtosis. Test reliabilities were determined by Kuder-Richardson formulas 14, 20, and 21. Standard errors were provided. Frequency distributions and histograms of obtained test scores were given, with the distributions collapsed into 25 class intervals.

Taking each test in turn, the researchers then revised it in view of their comparisons of the experts' opinions and the statistical information. For each option of each test item, experts' opinions were compared with responses by test takers who had made high test scores. The researchers omitted items which were extremely easy (proportion passing greater than .95) and some which were extremely difficult (proportion passing less than .05). Here also, the experts' opinions guided the work. In most cases, test items were improved and retained.

In some cases where the experts recommended testing additional matters of knowledge and skill, the researchers wrote new test items. In the case of KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION, TEST B, one of the experts who had suggested new items volunteered to write several of the kinds which he believed the test should contain. For KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE, TEST A, another national expert volunteered a number of items.

IV. RESULTS

The treatment of results below is limited to statistical information on the experimental edition used in the field testing.

A. Results of KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE, TEST A

Computerized data from responses to 78 multiple-choice items by 245 prospective high school English teachers revealed the following results:

Range of scores = 25-62

Mean raw score = 42.08

Standard error of estimate = .48

Standard deviation = 7.52

Kuder-Richardson Test Reliability = .666 (Formula 21)

Coefficient of Discrimination = .971

Standard error of measurement = 3.807

The computerized item analysis for all responses was examined carefully. In this work, the researchers considered the point-biserial correlation of the item score with the total test score their best statistic. The higher the correlation, the stronger the tendency for people with high test scores to get that item right and for people with low scores to miss the item. A negative correlation implies just the opposite: the people with high scores tended to miss it, and those with low scores tended to get it right. Thirty-one items had correlations of .25 and higher; no item had a negative correlation. Items with correlations below .25 were studied with special care and were revised as necessary. Another significant statistic which led to many changes in items was the proportion of 245 students selecting each response. Both the point-biserial item correlations and the proportions of students selecting each response were compared carefully. These statistics were then compared with the opinions of the national experts on items and options for items.

In the final revision, 75 of the original 78 items, many of which had been greatly revised, were retained, and 10 new items were added, resulting in a total of 85 items in this particular test.

B. Results of KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION, TEST B

A limited computerized item analysis was made of the responses which 241 prospective high school English teachers made to 54 items. Items in this test were designed to determine attitude as well as knowledge and departed from the usual multiple-choice formats. Students chose first between a pair of options and then among four options directly related to the choice just above (four possible reasons for making that choice).

In revising this test, the researchers compared the proportion of students who chose each option with comments by experts about the validity of the option. Fifty-two of the original 54 items, a few of which had been greatly revised, were retained, and 10 new items were added, resulting in a total of 62 items in this particular test.

Significant statistical results came from running a correlation matrix between the total responses which indicated a particular philosophy in teaching composition, on one hand, and high scores on the other three tests in the battery. The following excerpt from the TEST ADMINISTRATOR'S MANUAL used in the field testing provides background necessary to understanding the significance of these results. A discussion of the statistical results follows this excerpt.

> This test is based on the description of two hypothetical English teachers who have fundamentally different philosophies for teaching composition. The test scoring attempts to determine which of these two teachers the test-taker more closely resembles in terms of his attitude toward and approach to teaching composition.
>
> Teacher X. This teacher tends to emphasize the structure of discourse and the rhetorical characteristics. His course of instruction is frequently built around the modes of discourse--narration, description, exposition, and argumentation--and he treats these in order. He is likely to emphasize the structure of the paragraph, giving students instruction in paragraph form (topic sentence, body, concluding sentence) and supplying practice in paragraph patterns (comparison and contrast, details, particular to general, etc.). His composition assignments usually emphasize exposition and argumentation, calling for the students to deal with abstract problems, literary analysis, and the like.

This teacher feels that theme evaluation and revision are an important part of the writing process; after the student has written a draft, the teacher will show him his weaknesses in content and structure and allow him to correct these through revision. His basic theory, then, is that a student learns to write by being taught the characteristics of good writing and then practicing until he achieves these in his own writing.

Teacher Y. This teacher tends to emphasize the process of composing in his instruction. He believes that writing is "learned" rather than "taught," that a student's power over language grows as he has meaningful experiences communicating his ideas to others. This teacher's assignments are likely to grow out of the student's own experiences, and the writing will tend to be personal rather than expository or academic. He emphasizes the invention stage of composition, and much of his instruction will center on helping students find ideas and materials for their papers. This teacher is not likely to spend much time dealing with paragraph structure and rhetorical concepts like unity, coherence, and emphasis. He does not stress evaluation and revision of compositions, and he prefers to "respond" to the student's ideas. He may encourage the students to read and discuss each other's papers. The focus is on content, rather than structure and style, on the act of composing, rather than the qualities of prose. He is not especially concerned with correctness, and doubts that revision is a useful teaching device.

The first test question in each pair simply asks the test-taker whether he "agrees" or "disagrees" with a statement, or whether he thinks a piece of writing or teaching practice is "good" or "not good." Depending on his answer he receives one "X-point" or one "Y-point." The second question asks for a reason, and the student has a choice of four responses. The scores for these responses are weighted. If the test-taker's answer is "a little bit like Teacher X," he receives one X-point. If his answer is "a lot like Teacher X," he receives two X-points. The totals of his X- and Y-points indicate his "closeness of fit" to the profiles. There is a total of eighty-one possible points for the

test, and a candidate's total score can range from 54 to 81. A score of 72-X, 9-Y would indicate a teacher who is quite like Teacher X. A score of 26-X, 28-Y, would indicate a middle-of-the-roader, probably a teacher who places some emphasis on the process of composing, but also values the teaching of structure.

All scores should, of course, be treated flexibly--no actual research exists to prove conclusively that one kind of teacher is better than another, although clearly most current thinking tends to favor a teacher like "Y."

The purpose of the correlation matrix was to determine the extent to which prospective teachers who tended toward "X" on TEST B had made high scores on tests A, C, and D, and the extent to which prospective teachers who tended toward "Y" had made high scores on tests A, C, and D. A population of 161 test-takers had taken all four tests.

With 161 test-takers, a conservative estimate of degrees of freedom is 100. Associated with this, one needs a correlation of .16 or larger for the correlation to be significantly different from zero at the .05 level of significance, and .23 to be significantly different at the .01 level. Correlations are shown in the table below.

Composition Teaching Attitude as Measured by TEST B	TEST A Correlation	TEST C Correlation	TEST D Correlation
"X"	-.1535756	-.1053493	-.2406110
"Y"	.1772224	.1098496	.2705848

Thus, the correlations between "X" and A, "X" and D, and between "Y" and A, and "Y" and D are all significantly different. Although not significantly different, correlations between "X" and C and between "Y" and C tended in the same direction.

From these data one can conclude that persons who tended toward "Y" in their attitude about composition teaching tended to score high on tests A, C, and D; persons who tended toward "X" in their attitude tended <u>not</u> to score high on tests A, C, and D.

C. Results of KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN LITERATURE, TEST C

Computerized data from responses to 178 items by 191 prospective high school English teachers revealed the following results:

Range of scores = 50-149

Mean raw score = 102.63

Standard error of estimate = 1.44

Standard deviation = 19.86

Kuder-Richardson Test Reliability = .895 (Formula 21)

Coefficient of discrimination = .986

Standard error of measurement = 5.872

Both the point-biserial item correlations and the proportions of students selecting options were compared very carefully. These statistics were then compared with the opinions of the national experts on items and options for items. Ninety-two items had point-biserial correlations of .25 or higher; three items had negative correlations.

In the final revision, 163 of the original 178 items, many of which had been greatly revised, were retained, and 9 new items were added, resulting in a total of 172 items in this particular test.

D. Results of KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, TEST D

Computerized data from responses to 120 items by 187 prospective high school English teachers revealed the following results:

Range of scores = 48-95

Mean raw score = 73.41

Standard error of estimate = .71

Standard deviation = 9.69

Kuder-Richardson Test Reliability = .702 (Formula 21)

Coefficient of discrimination = .975

Standard error of measurement = 4.581

Both the point-biserial item correlations and the proportions of students selecting options were compared very carefully. These statistics were then compared with the opinions of the national experts on items and options for items. Thirty-seven items had point-biserial correlations of .25 or higher; five items had negative correlations.

In the final revision, 115 of the original 120 items, many of which had been greatly revised, were retained, and no new items were added.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The immediate objective of this study was to develop, administer, evaluate, and revise examinations which would effectively measure the knowledge and skills needed by prospective secondary school English teachers in the following areas: English language, written composition, literature, and methods of teaching English. This objective was accomplished.

An extensive computerized item analysis program was applied to the responses of prospective high school English teachers to KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE, TEST A; KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN LITERATURE, TEST C; and KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, TEST D. Kuder-Richardson Formula 21, the most conservative of the three formulas used, revealed fairly high estimates of reliability. Coefficients of discrimination were high for these three tests. In view of these statistics and others discussed above, the researchers conclude that tests A, C, and D showed up fairly well in field testing.

A limited computerized item analysis program was applied to the responses of prospective high school English teachers to KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION, TEST B. Data from the correlation matrix revealed that test-takers who tended toward "Y" (a philosophy which tends to emphasize the process of composing) tended to score high on tests A, C, and D and that test-takers who tended toward "X" (a philosophy which tends to emphasize the structure of discourse and the rhetorical characteristics) tended <u>not</u> to score high on tests A, C, and D. The correlation was especially high between the "Y" position and high scores on tests A and D; the correlation between the "Y" position

and high scores on TEST C tended in this direction. Thus, the data might indicate that the most knowledgeable prospective high school English teachers tend to stress the process more than the product in teaching composition to high school students. These results point to the possible usefulness of the composition test as a diagnostic instrument which may significantly relate the prospective English teacher's attitude and skill in composition to his knowledge of language, literature, and methods of teaching high school English.

By far the majority of the national experts who critiqued one or more of the tests volunteered to say that a thorough battery of tests is needed to test prospective high school English teachers in the United States. By far the majority spoke favorably about the strength and validity of the experimental editions produced in this study.

Suggestions from the national experts about items coincided to an amazing degree with strengths and weaknesses revealed by the statistical data. In most cases where experts spoke favorably about the strength of an item, the statistical data showed the item to be strong; in most cases where experts spoke negatively, data showed the item to be weak.

In view of the fairly favorable statistical results from the field testing of the experimental editions of the tests, and in view of the care taken to use expert opinions and statistical data as guides in revising items, the researchers conclude that the revised versions of tests A, B, C, and D are potentially useful to the profession in the training of prospective high school English teachers in the United States.

On the basis of the favorable results from the use of the experimental edition of the TEST ADMINISTRATOR'S MANUAL in the field testing, and on the basis of the care taken to use suggestions by experts and by test administrators in revising this edition, the researchers conclude that the revised version of the TEST ADMINISTRATOR'S MANUAL is potentially useful to the profession in the training of prospective high school English teachers in the United States.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In view of the favorable statistical results from the experimental editions, the favorable reactions of the majority of the national experts asked to critique the experimental editions, and the care taken to prepare revised versions, the researchers recommend that the revised versions of the ILLINOIS TESTS IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, together with the revised version of the test manual, be submitted to a leading test publisher for further development and national standardization. The researchers recommend the following steps as basic:

The development of a larger pool of items like those which are now in the revised versions of all four tests;

National field testing and standardizing of this enlarged pool of test items;

The development and publication of two or more equated forms of all four tests.

The implications of producing a nationally-standardized battery of professional tests for prospective high school English teachers are at least twofold: such tests could help to form a basis for assessing the preparedness of prospective teachers in specific institutions; such tests could help to form a basis or index for assessing the preparedness of prospective teachers across the nation.

The implications of this study might also extend to the possible field testing of these tests with inexperienced and experienced practicing high school English teachers or to the possible development of tests for teachers in these categories. A battery of professional tests which would take into account added preparation and experience and would include the results of national standardization with practicing teachers might be useful to those English educators in colleges and school systems who are responsible for the continuing education of high school English teachers.

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